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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: Priority theme: "National and international cooperation for social development": forging partnerships for social development

Statement submitted by Franciscans International and International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Dominican Leadership Conference, Elizabeth Seton Federation, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation and Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences and International Women's Anthropology Conference, non-governmental organizations on the roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

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Keeping in mind the United Nations Millennium Declaration resolution of developing strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil society in pursuit of development and poverty eradication, and the agreed conclusions of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development regarding the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, the members of the NGO

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

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Committee on Social Development and the above-named NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council urge the Commission on Social Development to consider the following aspects of "Forging partnerships for Social Development".

1. Regarding the integration of social and economic policy, inter alia, on the formulation and implementation of public policy, including macroeconomic policy, the Commission claims that to achieve this, it is important to promote sound institutions, open and transparent public policy and consensus-building among all partners. The aim should be to encourage broad participation in the formulation of economic policies as well as the building of partnerships between Governments and all other relevant actors, including social partners, in the development process (see E/CN.5/2002/6, para. 6).

The Secretary-General asks the General Assembly to explore ways of improving partnerships. As a first step he called for an expert group, including NGOs, to prepare a study on best practices in how those NGOs contribute to the work of the United Nations. The study can be the basis as to how to involve civil society more fully in the goals of the United Nations (see A/56/326, annex, millennium development goals, goal 8, Develop a global partnership for development).

Partnerships with the private sector and foundations are also noted as contributing to the success of the United Nations (ibid.)

Part of the solution in adapting to the rapid global changes is through "global policy networks" and coalitions for change with international institutions, civil society and private sector organizations, and national Governments (ibid.)

We recommend that participation of members of the private sector be distinct from the participation of NGOs who represent non-profit organizations.

2. Regarding the fulfilment of the Millennium Declaration development goals, the Commissions invite the Governments to consider: "Forging constructive partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental organizations to contribute to the financing and provision of social services in order to complement their efforts" (see E/CN.5/2002/6, para. 8).

Partnerships should be broadened to include all stakeholders in order to fulfil the millennium development goals which are "mutually supportive and require multisectoral programmes" (see A/56/326, para. 82).

We recommend that there be a clarification of those who represent civil society within the United Nations community and those who represent the private sector. The new partners of the private sector offer the United Nations community a unique point of view requiring a new form of status and voice, particularly in matters regarding human rights issues and social and environmental concerns.

3. The introduction to the Chairman's summary of the high-level governmental and expert panel discussion on the integration of social and economic policy presents a clear identification of the development of partnerships. He states: "It is now widely recognized that development objectives should encompass not only increases in national income per capita but also a broad range of social objectives, including creating productive employment, improvements in health standards and educational attainment, access to basic services as well as human rights. A much

more holistic vision of development is now held by policy makers in developing countries and by their development partners. Based on this vision, there is a growing consensus that there is a need for further integration of social and economic policies" (see E/CN.5/2002/6, para. 25).

The United Nations and its partners in development are all responsible for monitoring goals aimed at poverty reduction and development (see A/56/326, para. 83).

We recommend that there be clarification for the private sector partners to participate in the United Nations activities so that their participation is not solely for economic gain of the partners, but focused on the economic, social and environmental development of all peoples, particularly for those who live in conditions of poverty.